

**THE RELEVANCE OF BRAND EQUITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN****Zufarova Nozima Gulamiddinovna**

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**Abstract.** The role and importance of brand equity in today's transformation process in the higher education system is scientifically substantiated in the article.

**Key words:** education, consumer market, university, regional economy, brand.

It is often suggested that marketing in the service sector is relatively challenging due to the unique characteristics of the service and the dominance of experience and credence qualities. A particular consequence is that perceived risk is generally higher in a service selection decision because consumers find services more difficult to evaluate in advance of purchase (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Laing et al., 2002; Mitchell, 1999). In this situation, the brand can play an important role as a risk reliever, giving consumers greater confidence in their decision making and increasing trust (Erdem and Swait, 1998). [5]

As a result of the rapid change of the consumer market and the acceleration of digital technologies, the idea of brands is now giving rise to the service brand. [1] The desire to join the modern industrial world requires the creation of competitive personnel capable of quickly adapting to the needs of the rapidly changing labor market, in turn, requires the introduction of innovations into the higher education system. In the conditions of globalization, the future of our country cannot be imagined without enterprising, strategic thinking, educated and qualified personnel of the new generation. That's why special emphasis is being placed on the development of all aspects of education in our country.

In particular, the concept of developing the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 was adopted by the head of state in order to bring higher education to a new level. This concept defines measures aimed at training excellent personnel of specialists who can find their place in today's labor market. This concept envisages the gradual transfer of higher education institutions to the self-financing system, ensuring financial stability, and improving the infrastructure.

In the conditions of strong competition in the world, in the stable development of the modern global environment and in the process of its changing transformation, the concept of brand and brand capital is widely promoted, studying its essence and applying it in the course of its change has become one of the urgent issues. If we take the world experience as an example, the brand accounts for the largest share of income from intangible assets compared to tangible assets. Brand managers of higher educational institutions carry out various activities to increase the brand capital of institutions. A key issue for brand managers is to increase brand equity by engaging students with the brand and providing a good brand experience. [2] In this dissertation, the creation and improvement of brand capital is considered important in studying the nature and characteristics of the brand as a research object. Brand system includes: brand system, trademark, brand concepts and their importance in brand management. Of course, in order to understand the essence of brand equity and its function, it is important to first study its main elements.

In this regard, a video selector meeting was held in our country on February 5, 2024, under the chairmanship of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, regarding the discussion of priority tasks in the social sphere. Building a socially oriented state in Uzbekistan is defined as the main strategic goal. In this regard, tasks are defined in the established order to create suitable conditions for the population to get married, to develop the education system. Official organizations should develop conditions and procedures for connecting universities, technical schools and colleges based on foreign experience. It was emphasized that it should be updated based on the definition of specific criteria for granting status to higher education institutions, the optimization of bachelor's courses, and the analysis of the programs of the 300 best higher education institutions in the world.[3]

The current state of the higher education system and existing problems are presented in the Concept of the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 as tasks that must be solved as follows:

- the fact that local higher education institutions are not in the list of the top 1000 higher education institutions in the ranking of internationally recognized organizations, and their official websites are not in the top 1000 in the international ranking of Webometrics;
- Syllabuses of higher education institutions and the system of assessing student knowledge do not meet the standards in accordance with international accreditation;
- the infrastructure and dormitory facilities intended for students are not adapted to the needs of foreign students;
- it was found that the promotion work on attracting citizens from abroad to the higher education institution, including PR-projects, is not working enough, and there is no interactive virtual platform in this regard.[4]

The reason why the formation of brand capital is relevant in the educational market of Uzbekistan is that it can serve as a solution to the problems and tasks of the higher education system defined by the head of our state.

1. Competitive advantage - in the modern education market, the competition between educational institutions is becoming more and more intense. Universities and colleges strive to strengthen their position and distinguish themselves from other institutions of higher learning. A strong brand equity allows you to attract talented students, teachers, researchers and sponsors, which gives you a competitive advantage in today's market.

2. Student attraction and labor market - brand equity affects the demand of students to choose which institution of higher education. A prestigious educational institution with a good reputation attracts more students and contributes to the improvement of the number and quality of students. In addition, strong brand equity helps graduates of educational institutions gain an advantage in the labor market. This is because employers often prefer to hire graduates from well-known and reputable educational institutions.

3. Attracting funding and sponsorship - educational institutions with strong brand equity are increasingly able to attract funding and sponsorship. Organizations, foundations, and donors are interested in supporting successful educational institutions with reputable reputations. Brand equity acts as a vehicle to raise funds for research, infrastructure development, scholarships and other programs.

4. By supporting and attracting talented teachers and researchers, universities and colleges with strong brand equity will be able to attract talented teachers and researchers.

A prestigious educational institution provides attractive working conditions, opportunities for professional and scientific growth, attracts highly qualified specialists to the field of education.

5. Long-term stability and development - the higher education system requires long-term stability. Strong brand equity serves as a key factor in attracting resources and supporting institutions, sustaining long-term growth, and overcoming temporary challenges.

6. Internationalization and global ratings - brand capital plays a decisive role in the internationalization efforts of higher educational institutions. A strong brand attracts international students, teachers and partners and increases the global reputation of the institution. In addition, prestigious university rankings such as QS and Times Higher Education World University Rankings consider brand equity formation as one of the factors in the evaluation criteria. The attention and resources generated by a high score can help build brand equity.

7. Attracting graduates and networking with HEIs - its external approach can be widely used in improving the brand capital of an educational institution. It covers the reputation and future success of graduates. Successful alumni contribute to the institution's brand equity by becoming ambassadors, mentors and donors to the university. They create a comprehensive professional system that benefits students and graduates at the university, enhances the value of the educational experience and the long-term reputation of the institution.

8. A strong brand equity in cooperation and partnership helps to increase cooperation and partnership opportunities with other prestigious organizations both in the field of education and outside. Joint scientific projects, exchange programs, partnership programs with industrial enterprises contribute to the improvement of the quality of education and research and increase the brand capital of the institution.

9. Donors and charities tend to contribute to institutions with strong brand equity. A well-established brand instills trust in potential donors. This trend will allow funding for additional scholarship, research grants, infrastructure development, and other initiatives. Financial resources received through donations help to further strengthen the brand image of the institution.

10. Flexibility and Resilience – In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, higher education institutions must be flexible and competitive to remain relevant. Strong brand equity provides a foundation of trust that makes it easier for universities to manage change, embrace innovation and adapt to emerging trends. This enables them to attract and retain talented students and faculty, respond to market demands, and remain competitive in a changing higher education environment.

Overall, brand equity remains relevant in higher education due to its impact on internationalization efforts, graduate recruitment, partnerships, funding opportunities, flexibility and long-term sustainability. It is a valuable intangible asset that helps universities differentiate themselves from other educational institutions, attract resources and maintain a positive image – focus – in an increasingly competitive and dynamic educational landscape.

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